Successful Widowhood

Upstairs in the wood-beamed, wainscoted dining room of the "21" Club, banker Mary G. Roebling is greeted by name, shown to a red leather banquette and treated with the discreet solicitude accorded regular patrons. As the nation's leading woman banker—she is chairman of the board of the National State Bank of Elizabeth, New Jersey, a billion dollar institution with forty-seven branches throughout the Garden State—Mrs. Roebling entertains frequently at the posh Manhattan restaurant. But in 1937, when she inherited control of the ailing Trenton Trust Company from her husband Siegfried (whose industrialist forebears built the Brooklyn Bridge), she had no banking experience. For six years after being elected its president, she studied banking at New York University in the evenings, was tutored in law and used her considerable sales skills to attract new accounts. By 1972, when she merged the Trenton Trust Company with the National State Bank, she had upped its assets from $24 million to $217 million. . . .

The phone rings in the sun-flooded living room of Mary Lasker's Manhattan apartment, where the white walls, white upholstery and marble-topped furniture form a pristine backdrop for an explosion of colorful flowering plants and modern art. "That was the man who discovered the virus for leukemia," she says proudly. In the thirty-one years since the death of her husband, advertising pioneer and philanthropist Albert D. Lasker, the annual awards for medical research given in his name have become increasingly prestigious. Thirty-six recipients have subsequently won Nobel Prizes, and their discoveries—which include the development of polio vaccines, anti-hypertensive drugs and the heart-lung machine—have helped save lives and alleviate suffering. No wonder the annual awards luncheon, held each fall at the St. Regis Hotel, attracts a glittering array of medical specialists, scientists, health officials and media figures. . . .

Mary Lasker and Mary Roebling are just two examples of an intriguing social phenomenon: women who evolve into public figures after their lives are profoundly altered by widowhood. They are an impressive group of achievers—philanthropists, publishers, business executives, public servants—whose accomplishments have enriched their communities and country. Although their personalities are diverse, they share certain common characteristics. Today, young women routinely prepare for careers and expect to combine them with marriage and motherhood. But many of the nation's most prominent widows reached adulthood between 1920 and 1940, when church work and Junior League teas were the customary outlets for married women of social standing. They were devoted wives and mothers, obliging hostesses, and were content to stay in the background while their husbands—invariably dynamic, intelligent men—pursued success.

After death claimed their spouses, they were totally alone. Many were childless; others had seen their offspring settled in homes of their own. Faced with an excess of time on their hands, some emerged gradually into the area of philanthropy. Others inherited ownership of businesses or foundations and chose to become more than figureheads. The entities they took over have flourished under their control, and they have blossomed as well. They radiate confidence. They seem to possess unlimited amounts of energy. They are long-lived. They laugh a lot.

Yet the average widow is anything but merry. Losing a spouse ranks at the top of the Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale—a well-known stress indicator—higher than divorce or the loss of a family member such as a child. Many of the estimated 10.8 million widows in the United States never adjust to their new, solitary status. Psychological studies describe them as lonely and depressed. They suffer frequently from insomnia, and consume greater quantities of alcohol, cigarettes or tranquilizers than they did while their husbands were alive. What accounts for the difference?

Part of the answer, of course, is that some women are just better able to complete the bereavement process, which includes the ability to grieve, accept loss and ultimately forge a new life. Author Lynn Caine, whose husband died in 1971, pinpointed a key problem to be overcome in her book, *Widow:*

"Marriage is a symbiotic relationship for most of us. We draw our identities from our husbands. We . . . pour ourselves into them and their lives. We exist in their reflection. And then . . . ? If they die . . . ? It's wrenching enough to lose the man who is your lover, your companion, your best friend, the father of your children, without losing yourself as well. . . ."

Certain factors help predict whether a particular widow will be able to cope with this double-edged loss. Not surprisingly, the higher the educational and socioeconomic background of the widow, the more likely she is to pick up the pieces of her life and go on. "Educated women have more resources to draw upon," explains Chicago's Loyola University sociologist Helena Lopata, author of *Women as Widows* and numerous studies on the subject. "They usually have a wide circle of friends and have been involved, in a supportive way, with their husbands' careers. They've learned from their husbands."

The House is in session, and Representative Corinne ("Lindy") Boggs is shuttling back and forth between offices in Washington, D.C., and her home district in Louisiana. The wife of former Democratic Majority Leader Hale Boggs, who disappeared in a 1972 plane crash, Mrs. Boggs was the victor in a special election held after his death. Such candidates are usually trounced in the next regular election, but 67-year-old Lindy Boggs has been returned to her Congressional seat for four consecutive terms, and serves on the powerful House Appropriations Committee. A model political wife who, while her husband was alive, campaigned tirelessly, chaired the inaugural ball committees for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and worked closely with Lady Bird Johnson on her beautification efforts,

The Second Bloom

By Barbara Jepson

Mrs. Boggs views her former supportive role as excellent training for a Congresswoman. "I don't think I would have been prepared for my current position," she maintains, "if Hale hadn't helped me to develop leadership qualities and the ability to recognize sources of aid and influence." Although Mrs. Boggs was "very fulfilled" as a wife, she acknowledges that her perspective has changed since entering the political arena. "I do think," she muses, "that when a woman of my generation becomes a full-fledged person of some influence, she recognizes more acutely the areas in which women need to be boosted, mores have to be changed, or inequities must be removed. Had I recognized those inequities earlier, I might have been more inclined to prove that I could go out and do a job on my own."

Passionate involvement in their work seems to have been the best therapy for these widows. "When my husband died," says Faith Ryan Whittlesey, assistant to the President for public liaison and the only woman on the President's eighteen-member senior staff, "the twenty-four-hour-a-day demands of my career filled the emptiness in my life." An attorney who served two terms in the Pennsylvania State Legislature representing affluent Delaware County, 43-year-old Mrs. Whittlesey is considerably younger than the other widows interviewed and the only one with young children at home, but she too began her rise to prominence after the 1974 suicide of her husband Roger, a descendant of an old Philadelphia family. Mrs. Whittlesey became an active supporter of Ronald Reagan in 1976, cochaired the 1980 Republican Platform Sub-Committee on Foreign Policy and Defense and delivered the party's position on national defense to the convention. In 1981, President Reagan appointed her United States Ambassador to Switzerland, a post she held until last March, when she replaced Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole on the senior White House staff.

Whatever their field of endeavor, a recurrent theme in the tales of these widows is the satisfaction derived from their activities. "There's no substitute for the thrill of achievement," says banker Mary Roebling, who is also chairman emeritus of the profitable Women's Bank of Denver, which she cofounded in 1976, and a member of numerous civic and military organizations.

"Working on behalf of the Hospital for Special Surgery gave me a new purpose in life," echoes 85-year-old Mildred Hilson, one of New York's most social figures. Mrs. Hilson has reportedly raised $9 million for the Hospital For Special Surgery since joining its board in 1952, the year her husband Edwin, an investment banker, died. She started the hospital's annual benefit program and chaired it until recently. She still heads its public relations department, which she founded, and serves on a bevy of hospital committees. "I always had an inner desire to do something," she confesses, "but in those days, women didn't have careers. I think of my work these last thirty-one years as selfish pleasure; it's done *me* more good than it has the hospital."

Brooke Astor, who has overseen the giving of over $114 million to various New York City projects since becoming director of the Vincent Astor Foundation in 1959, expresses similar sentiments. "I know I'm not the same person I was twenty-four years ago when I inherited the foundation," she says. "I'm much more sure of myself. And I'm much happier, in a strange, weird way, because I feel a sense of accomplishment."

There is nothing strange about such feelings. "Once the mourning period is over," says sociologist Helena Lopata, "It's not unusual for widows to report feelings of increased competence and independence." According to Freda Rebelsky, professor of psychology at Boston University and herself a widow, part of these feelings may stem from taking charge of areas such as finances that were previously handled by their husbands. "More importantly," she explains, "it forces them to take a close look at themselves and examine their priorities. Financial pressures or sheer loneliness may lead some widows to take on jobs or activities they wouldn't have considered while their husbands were alive. They discover talents they never knew existed."

The chocolate-brown walls of the sparsely furnished sitting room in Metropolitan Opera patron Sybil Harrington's elegant Manhattan apartment are decorated with costume sketches from *Don Carlo, La Traviata, Manon Lescaut, Un Ballo in Maschera* and the much-acclaimed Franco Zefferelli production of *La Bohème.* "I tell friends this is the most expensive room in the house," jokes Mrs. Harrington, a pretty, sweet-natured Texan with an alabaster complexion. "That's because the sketches represent five opera productions I've underwritten." Mrs. Harrington, whose projects have included sponsoring a sold-out recital given by celebrated superstars Placido Domingo and Sherrill Milnes in January of 1983 and underwriting the newest Met production of *Francesca da Rimini,* refers to the Met and its staff as "my new family."

After the 1974 death of her husband, who had extensive oil and gas interests, Mrs. Harrington became president of the Don and Sybil Harrington Foundation, which focuses primarily on health care and education in Amarillo. She found it difficult to generate much enthusiasm for anything. "While Don was alive," she says, "he was my whole life. We traveled extensively; we entertained; I did the usual committee work. But I never had the desire to get *really* involved in anything on my own. Those first few years after he died were just—lost," she continues, her voice dropping to a whisper. "I needed desperately to get hold of myself and decide what to do with the rest of my life. I had always loved opera, and one afternoon, while attending a matinée at the Met, I thought, there must be *something* I could do here." Today, she attends every onstage rehearsal of her opera productions and wanders freely backstage afterwards, moving cautiously through the labyrinth of giant sets, stopping by the photography de-

partment to pick up pictures taken at a dinner party she gave for Domingo, Milnes and other friends after their recital, and keeping a watchful eye ("nothing boxy," she pleads) on set designs for her upcoming productions. "The Met changed my life," she says simply.

Other widows took the helm of family-owned businesses out of a desire to carry on their husbands' work, and discovered their forte in the process. "My husband died within seventy-two hours of a heart attack," says Edna Lacy, the 77-year-old chairman of Lacy Diversified Industries, a converted forest products corporation in Indianapolis, "and that's how much time I had to prepare for taking over the U.S. Corrugated-Fibre Box Company, chief of the conglomerate's seven entities. I was a housewife who had raised seven children—four of our own, and three of a sister's. Of course, I was a board member, and I had absorbed a lot of information about the packaging business by osmosis, but I knew *nothing* about day-to-day operations. It was very difficult at first; I worked twenty-hour days and went through the school of hard knocks."

Since 1959, the year her husband, Howard, died, the number of employees at LDI has grown from 300 to 1,000, and sales have increased fifteenfold. Mrs. Lacy feels that the experience of running LDI has broadened her as well. "When I decided to diversify the company," she says, "I diversified myself." Previously a bit of a homebody, whose life centered around the couple's seventy-acre estate on the outskirts of Indianapolis, she is now a member of thirteen civic and charitable boards; the founder of the Stanley K. Lacy Executive Leadership Series, a much-praised monthly seminar program for promising young executives that was established in honor of a son killed in an auto accident; and a strong advocate of business involvement in the community. Recently, she relinquished her position as LDI's chief executive officer to another son, Andre B. Lacy, but retirement is out of the question. "I wouldn't give up what I do to play golf and bridge," she insists, "for anything in the world."

The successes of 66-year-old Katherine Graham in overseeing the vast Washington Post Company communications network, which includes *Newsweek* magazine and several television stations, are well known. When her husband, Phil, committed suicide in 1963, Mrs. Graham was best known as a leading Georgetown hostess. But she had newsprint in her blood. Her millionaire father, Eugene Meyer, had purchased the *Washington Post* in 1933, and sold it to Mrs. Graham and her husband in 1948. Her husband had transformed the paper into the leading Washington, D.C., daily. Although she admits she was terrified at the prospect of running the business, she had no intentions of selling it. Under her leadership, advertising revenues have increased, and the paper won kudos for breaking the Watergate story. Last February, *Newsweek* celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a gala at Lincoln Center whose guest list included the Reagans, the Carters, Halston, Norman Mailer, Walter Cronkite and other luminaries from the media, political, art and fashion worlds.

Helen Kinney Copley also inherited a publishing empire—the Copley Press newspaper chain, which includes the *San Diego Union* and *Tribune*. Along with it, however, came a $30 million debt to the Wells Fargo Bank. A secretary for twelve years at Copley Press before marrying James S. Copley, its owner, in 1965, she was viewed as sufficiently shy and inexperienced to yield authority to the firm's top executives. But 61-year-old Helen Copley had other ideas. As chairman and chief executive officer, she made drastic changes to return the company to solvency. In the decade since her husband's death, she has sold twenty-three of the chain's fifty newspapers and strengthened the news gathering operations of the remainder. She has repaid the debt, taken lessons to overcome her fear of public speaking, become the first woman on the Wells Fargo Bank board and the California Chamber of Commerce, and completed a new office facility for the *State-Journal Register* in Springfield, Illinois. "I'm feeling pretty good about the company and myself right now," she says.

Helen Boehm is seated on the salmon-colored sofa in the living room of her apartment in Manhattan's Pierre Hotel, a room filled with eighteenth-century French furniture, Oriental screens and, of course, the meticulously sculpted Boehm porcelain birds, animals and flowers collected by statesmen and royalty the world over. Tomorrow she leaves for Palm Beach, where the Boehm-Palm Beach Polo Team, one of three she sponsors, will aim for its third

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The Busy Widows

Nina Abady, Richmond.
Executive Director, Virginia Opera Association. Widow of Aaron Abady, executive in the restaurant equipment business.

Caroline Ahmanson, Los Angeles.
Member of the World Affairs Council. Widow of Howard Ahmanson, founder of Home Savings & Loan Assoc.

Eleanor Bleakie, Boston.
Heads "Diplomats Off the Record." Widow of John Bleakie, investment banker.

Elizabeth Bocock, Richmond.
Active in local preservation, collects horse-drawn vehicles used to promote community events. Widow of John Bocock, lawyer.

Mae Boettcher, Denver.
Trustee of Boettcher Foundation. Widow of Charles Boettcher, investor.

Lindy Boggs, New Orleans.
Congresswoman. Widow of Congressman Hale Boggs.

Sala Burton, San Francisco.
Congresswoman. Widow of Congressman Phillip Burton.

Beverly Byron, Baltimore.
Congresswoman. Widow of Congressman Goodloe Byron.

Maria Cole, Boston.
Devotes a great deal of time to antismoking organizations. Widow of Nat King Cole, musician.

Louise Davies, San Francisco.
Philanthropist involved with the San Francisco Symphony. Widow of Ralph K. Davies, president of American Presidents Lines and Natomas.

Fran Fahnestock, Boston.
Trustee of Boston Symphony Orchestra. Widow of Harris Fahnestock, investor.

Sally Fellerhoff, Cincinnati.
City Council member, heads Bizazz Advertising and p.r. firm. Widow of Judge William Fellerhoff.

Millie Foster, Dallas.
Philanthropist active with artistic

groups such as the Van Cliburn Symphony. Widow of Hubert Foster, private investor.

Janet Fleishhacker, San Francisco.
Philanthropist involved with the opera, symphony and ballet. Widow of Mortimer Fleishhacker, investor and civic leader.

Adlyne Freund, St. Louis.
Operates the Freund Foundation with her daughter. Widow of Eugene A. Freund, entrepreneur who opened St. Louis' first movie house, dime store and parking lot.

B.J. Frye, Houston.
Runs "Options," a business to aid widows prepare for the business world. Widow of Elroy E. Frye, chemical engineer.

Phoebe Galgiani, San Francisco.
Adviser and former volunteer director of the International Hospitality Center. Widow of Dr. John Galgiani.

Elin Gulliver, Boston.
Active with the Salvation Army. Widow of William R. Gulliver, lawyer.

Patricia Hall, Kansas City.
V.P. Plaza Bank & Trust Company. Widow of Clifford Hall, insurance executive.

Margaret Hance, Phoenix.
Former Mayor, now co-chairman of the Reagan-Bush campaign. Widow of Richard M. Hance, insurance executive.

Deborah Howell, St. Paul.
Managing Editor, St. Paul Pioneer Press. Widow of State Senator Nicholas Coleman.

June Hurley, Phoenix.
Trucking company operator. Widow of Fred Hurley, company founder.

Dr. Elizabeth Jerome, Minneapolis.
Pioneer in dealing with teen-age drug problems. Widow of Dr. Bourne Jerome.

Florence Malouf, Los Angeles.
Serves on the National Arts Council in Washington. Widow of Thomas Malouf, retailer.

Marian Malouf, Los Angeles.
Started the Americana Project which donates scholarships to art students. Widow of Burgess Malouf, retailer.

Betty Marcus, Dallas.
Head of the Dallas Park Board. Widow of Edward Marcus, Neiman-Marcus executive.

Frances McAteer, San Francisco.
Active in the Democratic party, served on Recreation and Park Commission. Widow of Senator Gene McAteer.

Margaret McDermott, Dallas.
Philanthropist, art collector. Widow of Eugene McDermott, one of the founders of Texas Instruments.

Florence McDonnell, Atlanta.
Honoree of the 1984 Heart Ball, major contributor to the city. Widow of Everett P. McDonnell, owner of engineering concern.

Emily McFarland, Boston.
Serves on the Committee for Friends for Mount Vernon. Widow of Ross McFarland, doctor of space medicine.

Lupe Murchison, Dallas.
Honorary Consul of Nepal. Widow of John Murchison, one of the top Texas oilmen.

Patsy Pope, San Francisco.
Actively involved in racing world, owner/manager of 16,000 acre horse ranch. Widow of George A. Pope Jr., president of Pope and Talbot, Inc. and McCormick Steamship Company.

Alice Rainville, Minneapolis.
Minneapolis alderman and president of the City Council. Widow of Richard Rainville, fireman.

Priscilla Rea, Denver.
Psychologist. Widow of Howard Rea, attorney.

Iris Reeves, Baltimore.
Member of Baltimore City Council. Widow of Norman Reeves, member of Baltimore City Council.

Lurline Roth, San Francisco.
On the board of the Pacific National Life Assurance Co., one of the owners and developers of Ghirardelli Square, gave Filoli to National Trust for Historic Preservation. Widow of William P. Roth, president of Matson Navigation.

Norma Schlesinger, San Francisco.
Art critic, involved with the Leahey Foundation. Widow of Elmer Schlesinger, director of Hart, Schaffner and Marx, founder of Helicopter Services of California.

Jean Sheeling, Boston.
Owns ceramic business whose wares are sold to prominent stores. Widow of Paul D. Sheeling, investor.

Catherine Shouse, Washington, D.C.
Benefactor of Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts. Widow of Jouett Shouse, congressman from Kansas.

Gladys Slayden, Holly Springs, Miss.
Appointed to the Mississippi Department of Natural Resources, former member of Mississippi legislature. Widow of Thomas Everett Slayden, planter, cattleman, breeder and trainer of Tennessee Walkers.

Helen Spaulding, Boston.
President of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Hospital. Widow of Josiah Spaulding, former owner of the hospital.

Mary Stent, San Francisco.
Started a school for students to learn painting and drawing. Widow of Ernest Stent, stockbroker.

Dorothy Sterne, Denver.
Manages the Sterne-Elder Foundation, major patron of the Denver Symphony Orchestra. Widow of Charles Sterne, land investor.

Jean Sun, Scottsdale.
Established the David Sun Memorial Institute. Widow of David Sun, gastroenterologist.

Maria Tabb, Richmond.
Insurance agent. Widow of Cabell Mayo Tabb, who headed an insurance firm.

Elfi Teiner, Boston.
President of scrap metal business. Widow of A. Roland Teiner, founder of the business.

Ruth Ellen Patton Totten, Boston.
Registered witch, lectures on witchcraft. Widow of Major General James Totten.

Beverly von Weise, St. Louis.
Manages a gear business, serves on several volunteer boards. Widow of William von Weise, founder of gear business.

Lois Watkins, Ashland, Virginia.
Newspaper publisher. Widow of Paul Watkins, publisher of Herald-Progress.

Phyllis Wattis, San Francisco.
Philanthropist involved with San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California Academy of Sciences, Davis Symphony Hall. Widow of Paul Lyman Wattis, director of Utah Construction and Mining Company.

Leone Baxter Whitaker, San Francisco.
President of Baxter & Whitaker, political p.r. firm. Widow of Clem Whitaker Sr., acknowledged architect of the modern political campaign.

Claire Wiles, San Francisco.
Documentary film producer. Widow of Dr. Charles Wiles.

Rosalind Wyman, Los Angeles.
City Council member. Widow of Eugene Wyman, lawyer. □

SUCCESSFUL WIDOWHOOD

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consecutive World Cup championship. (In 1982 her English team vanquished *Les Diables Bleus*, whose players include Prince Charles, to win the coveted Queen's Cup.) At the moment, however, her mind is on the porcelain company she has chaired since the death of sculptor Edward Marshall Boehm in 1969. Like Olive Beech of Beech Aircraft, who built the expanding corporation she inherited into the nation's second largest maker of light aircraft, Helen Boehm worked alongside her husband right from the beginning. Running the business was no problem; instead, she had customers to convince. "After Ed died," she relates, "many of the stores which carried his work felt I would never make it without him. But Ed Boehm was a great professor; he forced us to learn. Still, I had to prove to the public that the company would not only continue, but go forward." And go forward it has. In 1969, Mrs. Boehm asked her head artist to create a pair of life-size swans, which President Nixon presented to Chairman Mao Tse-tung on his historic trip to China two years later. The caliber of the swans and subsequent work squelched any lingering skepticism on the part of collectors and agents. In 1971, two studios were opened in Malvern, England, and a new all-Boehm gallery opened in the Trump Tower last spring. But that wasn't enough for the irrepressible Helen Boehm. "Several years ago," she says, "I discovered polo, and fell in love with a sport that was mine and not my husband's."

"We all have a personality," observes Countess Donina Cicogna, whose husband, a leading banker, died nine years ago, "but when you are married, you concentrate on your husband; you derive happiness from his successes." After her spouse died, the countess, who was international chairman for both the 1982 Damon Runyon Walter Winchell Cancer Fund and a 1981 gala in Monaco benefiting the Dubnoff Center in California, decided to live part of each year in the United States. "I feel much stronger now," says the countess, who also maintains residences in Monte Carlo and Gstaad. "I feel my true personality coming out more in the United States."

Overseas travel also helped facilitate the transition from quiet, intensely private person to respected public figure for Margaret B. Young, widow of civil rights leader Whitney M. Young Jr. A mother of two who authored several children's books on notable black Americans before her husband's death in 1971, Mrs. Young has become a sought-after board member and U.S. emissary. In 1974, she represented the country at a U.N. Commission Human Rights Seminar in Yugoslavia; subsequent U.N.- or State Department-sponsored trips have taken her to Nigeria, Ghana and China. (During the first of two trips to the latter, she was a member of President Carter's visiting party.) She joined the board of directors of Philip Morris Incorporated in 1972, and also serves as a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a board member of the Lincoln Center Institute and a board member of the New York Life Insurance Company.

Whatever their lifestyles, these enterprising widows are constantly on the go; younger colleagues marvel at their stamina. Yet each maintains she would not have accomplished as much had her husband lived longer. "The time and energy I channeled into running the bank," says Mary Roebling, "would have been devoted to my husband and his interests."

"Marriage requires a large expenditure of a woman's physical and emotional energy," observes Boston University psychologist Freda Rebelsky. "Even if a woman has an active career and a fairly liberated husband, as I did, it's amazing how much extra vigor you have available for work once the mourning period is over. There seems to be a tremendous surge of creative energy; it's almost like being a teenager again."

Interestingly enough, none of the widows interviewed has remarried. "Walter was always a mile ahead of me," recalls Olive Beech, in a typical statement. "I couldn't find anyone else who measured up." Representative Lindy Boggs, who considers her greatest achievement "being an effective member of Congress without a wife," identified another obstacle to remarriage. "I think

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it would be difficult to find a man my age who would adjust to the demands of my career," she offers.

Of course, the greater longevity of women means that the number of potentially eligible men is limited. The latest U.S. Census figures show that, of the 12.5 million widowed persons in the country today, only 2 million are male. However, that figure is distorted by the amazingly high proportion of widowers who remarry. According to Ruth Loewinsohn, assistant coordinator of the Widowed Persons Service, a Washington-based national program of the AARP with 148 programs across the country, about 50 percent of all widowed males remarry within eighteen months of their wives' deaths. In addition, a 1981 Johns Hopkins study headed by Dr. Knud J. Helsing found that widowers aged 55 to 64 have a 61 percent higher mortality rate than married men in the same age bracket. (There was no statistically significant difference between mortality rates for widowed females and married women aged 55 to 64.) However, those widowers who remarry have the same mortality rate as married men.

Publicity surrounding the resignation of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, whose health and spirits declined visibly in the year following his wife's death, prompted psychologists to discuss why widowers are more affected by bereavement than widows. They theorized that because men have been conditioned to suppress their feelings, they are less likely to complete their "grief work." They noted that the death of a wife runs counter to longevity studies and expectations; many men simply assume their wives will outlive them and arrange their affairs accordingly. And they pinpointed what some widowers find the most difficult adjustment of all: coming home to an empty house with no warm meal, clean laundry and supportive, caring listener waiting for them.

"Women are more self-sufficient," says Brooke Astor, voicing an opinion shared by every widow interviewed. "They know how to run a house. A man left alone with a house, whether he's rich or poor, is sad. He's helpless. I think women are much stronger, physically and emotionally." Mary Lasker observed that, while affluent widowers could afford to hire a housekeeper, most of them don't—"they want to get it for free," she says laughing. Helen Boehm suggests that women can survive much more easily without their mates than men, "particularly if they have an interest such as I have. Then they are nourished by it. It fills up the lonely hours. My work gives me that beautiful creative feeling which *nothing* could replace. After all," she adds, "at this point, I could sell the business, go to the Riviera and bask in the sun, but at the end of each day, what would I have accomplished?" □